

Message Text

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20

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02

LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-10 SS-15 STR-08 CEA-02 L-03

H-03 PA-03 PRS-01 USIA-15 RSR-01 IO-13 /162 W

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R 300523Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9199

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 4970

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, KN, AS

SUBJECT: NORTH KOREAN TRADE DELEGATION TO AUSTRALIA

1. AUSTRALIAN EMBOFF (STEELE) HAS GIVEN FOLLOWING BACKGROUND ON THE RECENT VISIT TO CANBERRA OF NORTH KOREAN TRADE DELEGATION.

2. THE DELEGATION SPENT TWO WEEKS IN AUSTRALIA AT THE BEGINNING OF JULY, HOLDING DISCUSSIONS WITH COMMERCIAL FIRMS AND OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY FOR OVERSEAS TRADE. AS AUSTRALIANS PREVIOUSLY TOLD US, VISIT WAS AGREED TO FOLLOWING NEGOTIATIONS IN JAKARTA BETWEEN AUSTRALIAN AND NORTH KOREAN EMBASSIES.

3. STEELE SAID THE AUSTRALIANS WERE DETERMINED TO RESTRICT MISSION'S SCOPE TO PURELY ECONOMIC MATTERS. THE NORTH KOREANS, WHILE INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING ECONOMIC RELATIONS, OBVIOUSLY WERE DETERMINED TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE THEIR POLITICAL CONTACTS WITH THE AUSTRALIANS. FOR EXAMPLE, ALTHOUGH AUSTRALIANS HAD ORIGINALLY INSISTED THAT NO PYONGYANG FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS BE INCLUDED IN THE

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DELEGATION, THE NORTH KOREANS FINALLY WON PERMISSION

TO SEND ALONG A FOREIGN MINISTRY "INTERPRETER".

4. IN CANBERRA, IT EVOLVED THAT THE INTERPRETER, WHO SPOKE VERY POOR ENGLISH, WAS INDEED A DPRK FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL. HE APPROACHED AN AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIAL AT A SOCIAL FUNCTION AND ATTEMPTED TO DISCUSS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

5. IN A CALL ON MINISTER FOR OVERSEAS TRADE CAIRNS, THE LEADER OF THE DELEGATION ALSO WENT IMMEDIATELY INTO THE QUESTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. CAIRNS AND OTHER AUSTRALIAN OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY DEFLECTED THESE APPROACHES BY REFERRING TO THE ESTABLISHED CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION IN JAKARTA, NOTING IT WAS PREMATURE TO DISCUSS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AT THIS TIME.

6. ACCORDING TO STEELE, THE DELEGATION HAD REQUESTED AN EXTENSION OF STAY, BUT THIS WAS TURNED DOWN BY THE AUSTRALIANS. RESULTS OF THE VISIT HAVE NOT YET BEEN EVALUATED BUT IT APPEARS THE NORTH KOREANS WILL BE PURCHASING SOME DUMP TRUCKS AND POSSIBLY WHEAT FROM AUSTRALIA.

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